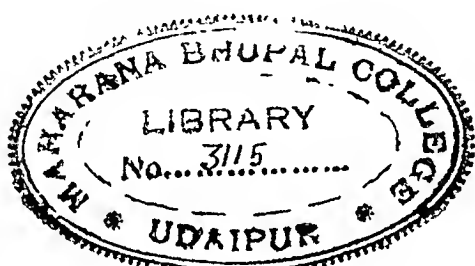


B O S W E L L  
A N D T H E G I R L F R O M  
B O T A N Y B A Y

BOSWELL  
AND THE GIRL FROM  
BOTANY BAY

BY  
FREDERICK A. POTTLE



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TO  
WILLIAM LYON PHELPS  
TEACHER, COLLEAGUE, FRIEND

*I dare not give, nor yet present,  
But render part of that's thy own.  
My mind & heart shall still invent  
To seek out Treasure yet unknown. )*



# P R E F A C E

*Boswell and the Girl from Botany Bay* was written as a Presidential Address for the Elizabethan Club of Yale University, and was read to the Club on 4th May, 1932. I have modified one or two references to an audience in the flesh, and have worked in a few bits of information which came into my hands later. It would have been possible to extend the scope of the essay greatly in preparing it for publication, but I have resisted the temptation, thinking that something would be lost and little gained by breaking the original framework. Instead, I have contented myself with adding an appendix of notes in which any reader who wishes greater detail can find nearly all the material pertinent to the subject.

Though the connection between Mary Bryant and Boswell was not generally known until the publication of the eighteenth volume of *The Private Papers of James Boswell* in 1934, the story of her escape is not new. Indeed, it has at least once been made the subject of a novel: *A First Fleet Family*, by Louis Becke and Walter Jeffery, published in London and New York in 1896. This purports to be "A hitherto unpublished narrative of certain remarkable adventures, compiled from the papers of

## P R E F A C E

Sergeant William Dew of the Marines." In the Preface Messrs. Becke and Jeffery (who call themselves "the editors") explain that the journals of Sergeant Dew were entrusted to them for publication by his grandson (they even print a letter from that gentleman!), and admit having made "slight alterations." How far their narrative departs from the facts may best be seen by comparing a digest of the invented portions with the authentic record: Mary Broad was the daughter of a French officer, a prisoner of war, who married an English girl of "Solcombe" in the Isle of Wight. She became personal maid to Miss Fairfax, the Squire's daughter. She was courted by the Squire's son, a young lieutenant of Marines, and by William Dew, a farmer's son, author of the narrative. But she scorned both of them and fixed her heart on a handsome young smuggler, William Bryant. Dew, hoping to rise in Mary's good graces, allowed Bryant to involve him in a smuggling venture. Both men were captured; Dew was let off on condition of joining the Marines, but Bryant, an old offender, was given a sentence of seven years. Mary helped him break jail, but she and her lover were apprehended and ordered to be transported. Dew, because of a further misadventure with smugglers, was selected as one of the Marines to go to Botany Bay in Lieutenant Fairfax's company. The story then follows the actual events fairly closely, though with much romantic embellishment. The only serious departure is that little Emanuel Bryant is made to die on the voyage between Port Jackson and Timor, instead of at Batavia. Fairfax and Dew, returning to England in the *Gorgon*, meet Mary again at the Cape of Good Hope. Fairfax befriends her, obtains her pardon, and marries her; Dew (now Sergeant) marries Miss Fairfax. It would seem doubtful that the story could have

imposed on any one familiar either with the manners or the diction of the eighteenth century, but Sergeant Dew appears as a real person in more than one library catalogue, and "his" story has been cited as a historical document by more than one editor—perhaps most recently by Sir Basil Thomson in the Introduction to his valuable edition of the narratives of Edwards and George Hamilton—*Voyage of H.M.S. Pandora. A First Fleet Family* is a pleasantly written and substantially accurate account of the founding of the colony, and in its account of Mary Bryant draws heavily on the genuine sources cited in my notes, but so far as it departs from those sources it is a pure fiction.

This novel, which I did not see until my own paper was completed, was called to my attention by Mr. Alexander O. Viotor, then a sophomore in Davenport College, Yale University. I wish also to acknowledge assistance from Mr. A. de C. Glubb of Liskeard and Mr. T. H. L. Hony of Fowey, who helped me with local researches, and Mr. David B. Quinn of the Institute of Historical Research, London, who at my request searched the papers in the Public Record Office.

F. A. P.

*New Haven, Conn.*

*July 1st, 1937.*

# ILLUSTRATIONS

MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE VOYAGES OF  
BRYANT, EDWARDS, AND BLIGH

*Following this leaf*

LETTER FROM BOSWELL TO THE RT. HON.  
HENRY DUNDAS, [16 AUGUST 1792],  
CONCERNING MARY BRYANT AND HER  
COMPANIONS

*Facing page 24*

*Previously unpublished; reproduced with the kind permission of  
the owner, Dr. Amos A. Ettinger.*

PACKET ENDORSED BY BOSWELL, "Leaves  
from Botany Bay used as Tea"

*Facing page 28*

*In the possession of Lt.-Col. Ralph Heyward Isbam.*



MAP

*To illustrate the voyages of  
Bryant, Edwards and Bligh*

BOSWELL  
AND THE GIRL FROM  
BOTANY BAY



THE editor of old journals and letters has one of the most absorbing tasks permitted to man, but I venture to think that when he opens the publisher's parcel and sees his work irrevocably fixed within the bounds of the printed page, his feelings partake less of satisfaction than of disappointment and frustration. He began with a clutter of obscure and untidy scrawls, the chronology of which was uncertain and the text doubtful. It was nothing but a heap of old sheets of paper with queer marks on them. His first task was the purely mechanical one of finding out what words the marks stood for, with no regard to sense. He puzzled over blotted and erased passages; he spent hours filling in lacunæ so as to take into account all the minute evidences of the manuscript; he weighed the chances whether his author really meant to write *advise*, as the manuscript seems to indicate, or whether his pen slipped when he made the "d." Finally that part of the work is done, at least to his partial satisfaction. The text is there, stretched and ironed into shape, with all its footnote array of *sics* and "doubtfuls." But by this time, if the editor has performed his textual labours manfully, he has far more than a mere copy. The pages of his transcript are to him windows opening into the past, revealing, now dimly and confusedly, now sharply and clearly,

scenes of a vanished age. For you can not make a really final text of any difficult document without having read nearly all the books in the world. Is that man's name Richson or Rickson? You will have to pore over many volumes to be sure. What did your author, in the midst of notes on Bristol and Chatterton, mean by the word "cranes," isolated from everything that follows and everything that precedes? You can find out, but it will not be by asking your friends.

Having, as you say, "established your text," you proceed to "annotate" it. It is then that the sense of futility begins to weigh you down. You feel like a reservoir filled to overflowing with sparkling information. There is so much in your head about that half-page, but it would fill two pages of fine print if you wrote it out, and even if you spent days on it, you know that it would be so dull that nobody but a professional student would ever read it. You are inhibited by the convention that footnotes must be written in a style devoid of all personality, and by the more pertinent fact, which your own experience has demonstrated, that if footnotes swell to too great proportions, they overwhelm the text and the result is chaos. You finally content yourself with a few crabbed lines on each page informing your reader that Samuel Johnson died in 1784 and that "Young" was Edward Young (1683-1765) who wrote *Night Thoughts*. As though that did anybody any good! And you feel precisely as though you had thrown a net around a river; you have slowed up the current a little but the water has all gone through.

This is particularly true of what may be called the annotation of human interest. It is your admitted privilege to erect neat little tombstones for the most prominent persons men-

tioned in your text, but how far dare you go in giving extensive information about the utterly obscure ones? It is precisely the obscure ones that need it, for the others are in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. But this person who passes once across the page, whose name will evoke no echo of recollection in any reader—will you tell his story at length and point out the rich significance of that casual encounter? Only rarely, and when you do you will be scolded by your peers for having no sense of proportion. You will finally come to see that, do what you may, nobody else will ever understand that document as you do unless he edits it himself. Your best labours go unrecorded and die with you. You seek only the relief of cornering your friends occasionally and forcing them to listen to your rejected footnotes.

What follows is an inordinately long footnote: first, to Professor Tinker's edition of Boswell's letters; secondly, to Mr. Lewis Bettany's edition of the diaries of Boswell's intimate friend, William Johnson Temple; thirdly, to Messrs. Nordhoff and Hall's *Mutiny on the Bounty*; finally, to Boswell's own Journal. It is a note which will take us from Scotland to Cornwall, from London to Rio de Janeiro, from the Cape of Good Hope to Australia, from Botany Bay to Timor in the Dutch East Indies, from Java back to England. And it will end at Fowey in Cornwall.

On 13th October, 1794, when Boswell was within seven months of his end, he wrote a letter from his estate of Auchinleck in Ayrshire to his brother David in London; a letter filled with laments at his wretchedness in this, the last visit he was ever to make to his ancestral mansion, and with thoughtful and

precise directions concerning his financial affairs. We are concerned only with the following sentences: "Be so good as to give Mrs. Bruce five pounds more and Betsy a guinea, and put into the Banking shop of Mr. Devaynes & Co. five pounds from me to the account of the Rev. Mr. Baron at Lestwithiel, Cornwall, and write to him that you have done so. He takes charge of paying the gratuity to Mary Broad." Mrs. Bruce was his housekeeper; Betsy, his youngest daughter. But who was Mary Broad, why should Boswell be paying her a "gratuity," and why should he enlist the services of a Cornish clergyman in the matter?

The diaries of William Johnson Temple remained unpublished until 1929. The passage I have just quoted naturally caught the eye of Mr. Bettany when he was editing them, for Temple was also a clergyman in Cornwall, and was a friend of the Rev. John Baron of Lostwithiel. In the summer of 1792 Boswell, with his two eldest daughters, had visited Temple at St. Gluvias, and had met Baron at that time. "But why," queried Mr. Bettany, "should he request a new acquaintance like Baron, who lived in so remote a place as Lostwithiel, to undertake the business of paying a gratuity? It all looks extremely odd and unaccountable; and one can not help wondering what the real object was in this strange manœuvre. Irons in the fire, of course; but what use did Boswell expect to make of them?"

Mr. Bettany, it is only fair to state, is not to be blamed for not identifying Mary Broad and so clearing up the whole mystery. Without the clues furnished by Boswell's Journal, which was not published when Mr. Bettany wrote, it would have been only by a stroke of luck that any one could have

identified her. But he might, perhaps, have drawn the conclusion that Mr. Baron was asked to pay the gratuity to Mary Broad because she lived somewhere in his vicinity; and Boswellians (a jealous fraternity) will think that he deserves mild reproof for his assumption that Boswell always had irons in the fire when he performed acts of kindness. For there exists, scattered through the two volumes of Boswell's letters, abundant evidence to the contrary.

I reviewed Mr. Bettany's book in 1929, soon after I assumed the editorship of the Boswell Papers. I find that in the margin opposite the name "Mary Broad" I scrawled, "Yes, Journal," and opposite the sentence about irons in the fire, "Can I discover?" I can now answer "Yes" to that query. But instead of recounting the series of false starts and lucky chances by which I pieced the narrative together from bits gained here and there, I shall simply tell in straightforward fashion the story of Mary Broad, citing my sources only when I make direct quotations.

When the American Colonies revolted from the Crown and succeeded in establishing their independence, the ministers in charge of the destinies of Great Britain were faced by two urgent problems: how could they acquire new colonies to restore their country's prestige, and how could they provide a dumping ground for the hordes of convicted felons who had been crowding the jails ever since the outbreak of the American War? It must not be forgotten that, from the reign of James the First, transportation beyond seas had been an essential feature of the penal administration of Great Britain. There were then no penitentiaries in the modern sense of the term. Criminals might be sentenced to corporal punishment or brief terms in

houses of correction, but if their crimes were of any magnitude according to the savage code of the day, they were either hanged out of hand or transported to the colonies, where their services were sold to the planters for longer or shorter periods at a rate of as much as twenty pounds a head. For some years before the War of Independence this compulsory emigration had been bringing each year about two thousand unwilling Founders of First Families to the American shores.

A solution to both problems was immediately proposed: Australia. The Portuguese and Spaniards were the first to sight that great continent; the Dutch first explored it and gave it the name, New Holland, under which it was generally known throughout the eighteenth century; Dampier made it the object of a voyage of discovery. But it was Captain James Cook who in 1770 first carefully charted one of the coasts. He had been sent with Sir Joseph Banks in the *Endeavour* on a strictly scientific quest: he was to go to Tahiti to observe the transit of Venus, and then proceed southward to look for the Terra Australis Incognita, a great continent supposed to extend to the South Pole. If he failed to find it (as of course he did), he was to explore New Zealand, and then come home by any route he thought proper. Having surveyed New Zealand, he touched near Cape Howe, at the south-east corner of Australia, and then proceeded up the east coast, giving many of the bays and promontories the names they still bear, Botany Bay was so christened because of the abundance of flowers found there by Banks. It was but natural that twelve years later, when it became clear that America was lost, the thoughts of British statesmen should turn to the vast island reported by Cook. He had, indeed, recommended it as a penal colony as early as 1779.



On 18th August, 1786 Lord Sydney wrote an epoch-making letter to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury. It begins as follows:

"MY LORDS:

"The several gaols and places for the confinement of felons in this kingdom being in so crowded a state that the greatest danger is to be apprehended, not only from their escape, but from infectious distempers . . . his Majesty, desirous of preventing by every possible means the ill consequences which might happen from either of these causes, has been pleased to signify to me his royal commands that measures should immediately be pursued for sending out of this kingdom such of the convicts as are under sentence or order of transportation."

He then goes on to say that the sloop *Nautilus*, having been sent out on the recommendation of a Committee of the House of Commons, reports that the southern coast of Africa, which it had been hoped would prove an eligible spot, was quite unfitted for a penal colony, and therefore "his Majesty has thought it advisable to fix upon Botany Bay, situated on the coast of New South Wales . . . which, according to the accounts given by the late Captain Cook . . . is looked upon as a place likely to answer the above purposes."

The order for the First Fleet then follows. Seven hundred and fifty convicts are to be sent with a guard of marines; they are to carry with them two years' provisions and touch at the Cape of Good Hope for seeds and live-stock. Since there will be many more male convicts than female, it is suggested that

the tender which is to accompany the convoy "be employed in conveying to the new settlement a further number of women from the Friendly Islands, New Caledonia, etc., which are contiguous thereto, and from whence any number may be procured without difficulty; and without a sufficient number of that sex it is well-known that it would be impossible to preserve the settlement from gross irregularities and disorders." It is only fair to add at once that this last repulsive recommendation was not carried into effect.

It was nearly a year before the convoy actually sailed, a delay which can hardly be considered excessive in view of the magnitude of the undertaking. First of all the Government had to select a leader for the expedition. It would have been difficult to fix upon a better man than the one chosen: Arthur Phillip, a man trained to the sea, who had seen service in the war with France. The abuses of the first voyage were terrible enough, but they would have been far worse if it had not been for Phillip's vigilant and humane oversight of every detail of the fitting out of the fleet. In much he was overruled, but one of his stipulations was honoured: there should be no slavery in the new country. The Public Record Office contains a large *dossier* of his letters to the Commissioners. He protested at the shortness of the rations allowed by the contractors, the absence of anti-scorbutics and surgical supplies, and the crowding of the convicts. On 12 March, 1787, having failed to induce the Navy Board to make any alteration in the contracts, he asked Lord Sydney to put him on record as having declined responsibility for the deaths which might ensue. Six days later he wrote indignantly to Under-Secretary Nepean: "The situation in which the magistrates sent the women on board the *Lady*

*Penrhyn* stamps them with infamy—tho' almost naked, and so very filthy that nothing but clothing them could have prevented them from perishing, and which could not be done in time to prevent a fever, which is still on board that ship. . . . There is a necessity for doing something for the young man who is on board that ship as surgeon, or I fear we shall lose him, and then a hundred women will be left without any assistance, several of them with child. Let me repeat my desire that orders immediately may be given to increase the convict allowance of bread. Sixteen pounds of bread for forty-two days is very little. On 11 April he complained in a postscript: "By some mistake 109 women and children are put on board the *Lady Penrhyn*, tho' that ship was only intended to carry 102, and with propriety should not have more than two-thirds of that number." He continued to beg for clothing for the women. He got little comfort from the Navy Board, which had already let the contracts for fitting out the fleet. As to short rations, he was informed that "when it is considered that the confinement on shipboard will not admit of much exercise, this allowance will be found more advantageous to the health of the convicts than full allowance," and the clothing never did come on board.

The fleet sailed on 13 May 1787: the man-of-war *Sirius* and the armed tender *Supply*; three storeships; and six transports carrying the convicts and the marines. There were 757 convicts in the convoy, of whom upwards of two hundred were women.

Among these wretched people we shall distinguish only two: William Bryant, age unknown, a Cornish fisherman, sentenced at the Launceston assizes in 1784 to seven years' transportation "for resisting the revenue officers, who attempted

to seize some smuggled property he had," and Mary Broad, a girl of twenty-two, who had been capitally convicted at the Exeter assizes in 1786 for participating with two other women in a street robbery at Plymouth and stealing a cloak. Concerning her earlier history we know nothing except that she came of a poor but respectable family of Fowey in Cornwall, that her father, William Broad, was a "mariner," and that she was baptized in Fowey church on 1 May, 1765.

It is not my intention in this paper to indulge in romance. I prefer (and I think my readers will prefer) the bare but authentic evidence of the contemporary documents. The space at my disposal is, however, limited; and I have chosen to give a sample of full documentation, and then to move forward with a rapid summary. From this point up to the spring of 1791 I shall present little detail. The reader should remind himself, however, that the period involved is no less than four years.

The fleet touched at Teneriffe, and then sailed for Rio de Janeiro, which was reached on 5 August. On 13 October it anchored at the Cape of Good Hope, and by 20 January, 1788 the whole convoy was in Botany Bay. The trip had lasted more than eight months, and had carried the convicts three-fourths of the way around the globe. Forty-eight of them had died in the passage, a mortality of six per cent, which under the circumstances must be regarded as low, for many of them had been ill when the fleet sailed. The later convoys had a much worse record.

It is hard for us to-day to realise clearly the reckless temerity of the undertaking. No preparation whatever had been made for the reception of the convicts in Australia. Phillip was expected to land in a new and savage country at

eight months' sailing distance from his source of supplies, and there within two years to establish a self-supporting colony. It would have been touch-and-go if the colonists had been farmers, artisans, and frontiersmen, carefully selected for strength, skill, and integrity. Phillip's colonists were actually the most vicious offscourings of England. They were nearly all townsmen and knew no manual trade. In the whole First Fleet there were only twelve men who could handle carpenter's tools, though it must have been obvious before the Fleet sailed that as soon as the convicts landed, buildings would have to be erected to house them. The farming implements furnished by the profiteering contractors turned out to be almost useless, and nearly all the seed-wheat failed to grow. No new clothes had been provided, and there were no needles and no thread to mend the old ones. The land about Sydney Cove may have delighted a botanist like Banks, but it was ill-suited for agriculture, even if the convicts had been better farmers. The colony was threatened with famine almost from the beginning.

The Fleet had brought provisions calculated to be sufficient for two years. Two years passed, and no relief came from home. In fairness to Parliament, it must be said that a supply ship was sent in 1789, but it struck on an iceberg near the Cape of Good Hope, and had to be abandoned. The *Sirius* made one trip to the Cape for provisions, returning seven months later with some flour, but in March 1790 she was wrecked on one of the reefs with which the South Seas abound. The little tender, the *Supply*, now the sole hope of the colony, sailed for Batavia. Everybody, including the Governor, went on famine allowance. Men began to die of starvation. No fewer than 140 members of the colony died from various causes during this year--

One day in June 1790 the lookout raised a great shout, and men and women came running with tears and laughter to see a ship bearing into the bay. She proved to be the *Lady Juliana*, no supply ship at all, but a transport bringing a fresh detachment of female convicts. She was, in fact, the forerunner of the "Second Fleet," which finally straggled in, each vessel with its quota of felons. Eleven hundred had sailed, of whom 267 had died on the voyage, while 488 had to be put into hospital on their arrival. The newcomers had not brought enough food to maintain themselves. And the summer of 1790 was a long drought.

Meanwhile, William Bryant had married Mary Broad, and she had borne him two children. He had been made fisherman for the Colony, and consequently had access to the Governor's boat, an open cutter fitted for a lug-sail and six oars. In December 1790 a Dutch schooner touched at Sydney Cove with a small store of provisions which had been purchased at exorbitant prices at Batavia for the Colony. Bryant, whose sentence had expired, but who saw no prospect of ever being sent back to England, resolved upon a plan of escape so desperate that one thinks it could have been prompted only by despair. The convicts had some money which they had brought with them from home, and which they naturally found of little use at Botany Bay. Bryant bought surreptitiously from the Dutch captain one hundred pounds of rice and fourteen pounds of pork, and bribed the baker of the Colony to give him one hundred pounds of flour. He also procured a quadrant, a chart, a compass, and two old muskets from the Dutch captain. At ten o'clock on the night of 28 March, 1791, he, his wife Mary, their little boy Emanuel (aged three), their daughter

Charlotte (a baby at the breast), and seven other convicts named John Simms, William Morton, James Cox, James Martin, John Butcher, William Allen, and Nathaniel Lilley, slipped away from their quarters and made for the Governor's boat. In their haste they dropped some of their rice, a net, and some tools which they had intended to carry with them. But they made good their escape, though pursued; pushed their craft out of the harbour, and headed northward, their goal being the Dutch island of Timor, more than three thousand miles away, or approximately the distance from New York to Southampton.

We have, alas, no log of their voyage. Our sources of information concerning it are two: an intelligent, though perhaps not altogether accurate, account written by a newspaper reporter who interviewed the survivors more than a year later, and the journal kept by Watkin Tench, officer of marines at Botany Bay, who had the singular fortune to have gone out on the same ship with Mary Bryant, to have been at the penal colony when she made her escape, and to have met her again under circumstances which I shall later describe. I shall avoid the temptation to sentimentalise the story, by quoting directly from these matter-of-fact narratives.

[*London Chronicle*, June 30—July 3, 1792.] "The monsoon had just set in, and the wind was contrary. . . . They were forced to keep along the coast as much as they could, for the convenience of procuring supplies of fresh water; and on these occasions, and when the weather was extremely tempestuous, they would sometimes sleep on shore, hauling their boat on the land. The savage natives, wherever they put on shore, came down in vast numbers with intent to murder them. They now found two old musquets, and a small quantity of powder,

which Capt. Smyth [the Dutch captain] had given them, particularly serviceable, by firing over the heads of these multitudes, on which they ran off with great precipitation; but they were always forced to keep a strict watch. . . . In lat. 26.27 [they] discovered a small island, on which no inhabitants were; here was great plenty of turtles, that proved a great relief to them; but they were very near being lost in landing. At this island they dried as much turtle as they could carry, which lasted them ten days. During the first five weeks of their voyage they had continual rains; and being obliged, in order to lighten the boat, to throw overboard all their wearing apparel, etc., were for that time continually wet. They were once eight days out of sight of land."

[Tench, *Complete Narrative*.] "They coasted the shore of New Holland, putting occasionally into different harbours which they found in going along. One of these harbours, in the latitude of 30° south, they described to be of superior excellence and capacity. Here they hauled their bark ashore, paid her seams with tallow, and repaired her. But it was with difficulty they could keep off the attacks of the Indians. These people continued to harass them so much that they quitted the main land and retreated to a small island in the harbour, where they completed their design. Between the latitude of 26° and 27°, they were driven by a current 30 leagues from the shore, among some islands, where they found plenty of large turtles. Soon after they closed again with the continent, when the boat got entangled in the surf, and was driven on shore, and they had all well nigh perished. They passed through the straits of Endeavour, and beyond the gulf of Carpentaria found a large fresh water river, which they entered, and filled from it their empty



casks. Until they reached the gulf of Carpentaria, they saw no natives, or canoes, differing from those about Port Jackson. But now they were chased by large canoes, fitted with sails and fighting stages, and capable of holding thirty men each. They escaped by dint of rowing to windward."

On 5 June, 1791 they came safe into Kupang at Timor, without the loss of a life, having been ten weeks in the passage.

Timor must have come to regard such casual apparitions of Britons in open boats as a thing to be expected of that enterprising race. Just two years before, Captain William Bligh of the *Bounty* had been set adrift by his mutinous crew near Tofoa in the Friendly Islands; set adrift in an open six-oared boat with eighteen loyal members of his crew. By use of compass, quadrant, and his memory of the South Seas (for the mutineers allowed him no chart) he brought his party safely four thousand miles across the sea to Timor. When the mutiny was reported at home, the Government sent Captain Edward Edwards to the South Seas in the *Pandora* to apprehend the mutineers. He took several of them at Tahiti, but in his way back through Endeavour Straits, the *Pandora* was wrecked, and the survivors, with some of the mutineers still in their clutches, made *their* way to Timor in the boats. All this has been told, and splendidly told, in Nordhoff and Hall's *Mutiny on the Bounty* and *Men Against the Sea*. The exploits of Bligh and Edwards have been widely and deservedly heralded, for the simple reason that Bligh published a book about his adventures, and Edwards turned in a report to the Admiralty, whereas it is probable that not one of Bryant's party could write. Of the three, it seems to me that Bryant's voyage was the most remarkable, for he had on board a woman and two little children,

there was no professional navigator in the party, and of the entire crew only he and one other convict are known to have been familiar with the sea.

At Kupang, Fate made them the object of one of its pleasant ironies. They were kindly treated by the Dutch Governor, who believed their story that they were the passengers and part of the crew of an English brig which had suffered shipwreck, and that their boat had become separated from another bearing their captain and the rest of the crew. For some time they lived at peace, no doubt taking a malicious pleasure in the knowledge that their bills were being charged against the British Government. But their behaviour gave "rise to suspicion; they were watched, and one of them at last, in a moment of intoxication, betrayed the secret." The Governor immediately arrested them and put them in prison. On 17 September Edwards came paddling in with the genuine castaways from the *Pandora*. The Governor delivered the convicts into his custody. Edwards clapped the party in irons, added them to his mutineers, and started for England with them in a vessel belonging to the Dutch East India Company. The climate was peculiarly dangerous to Europeans, and there was great sickness on board. Batavia was reached on 7 November, and three weeks later the little boy, Emanuel, died in the hospital. On 22 December his father followed him. Between Batavia and the Cape of Good Hope William Morton and John Simms succumbed to the prevalent infection, and James Cox jumped overboard. Edwards says he was drowned; his surgeon, George Hamilton, says that he swam safe to shore. Edwards appears to be more reliable than Hamilton, and as the poor man almost certainly had an iron shackle on his leg, it is highly

doubtful that he managed to escape. At the Cape of Good Hope Edwards found H.M.S. *Gorgon*, which had carried convicts to Botany Bay and was now on its return voyage. On board was the marine captain Tench whose account of the escape I have already cited.

"It was my fate," he says, "to fall in again with part of this little band of adventurers. In March 1792, when I arrived in the *Gorgon*, at the Cape of Good Hope, six of these people, including the woman and one child, were put on board of us, to be carried to England. [Here follows the account of their adventures quoted above.] I confess that I never looked at these people without pity and astonishment. They had miscarried in a heroic struggle for liberty, after having combated every hardship, and conquered every difficulty. The woman and one of the men had gone out to Port Jackson in the ship which had transported me thither. They had both of them been always distinguished for good behaviour."

The *Gorgon* sailed for home on 6 April 1792. Just one month later, somewhere on the high seas, the little girl, Charlotte Bryant, died. In the log of the *Gorgon* she is somewhat unhumorously described as "a supposed deserted convict from Port Jackson." When Mary Bryant was brought before Nicholas Bond, Esq., of the Public Office in Bow Street on 30 June, 1792, she had lost husband and children; she had passed through such adventures as no other English woman of her time had experienced; and she was twenty-seven years old. Consider for a moment the pathos of the description still preserved in the manuscript register of Newgate Prison; it tells you all you are likely ever to know of her personal appearance: "Mary Bryant, *alias* Broad. Age 25 [it should be 27], height

5' 4", grey eyes, brown hair, sallow complexion, born in Cornwall, widow."

It will not do, in the light of what we know about Mary, to make her out the victim of a monstrous miscarriage of justice. The punishments meted out to lawbreakers in the eighteenth century were severe, but the courts were remarkably fair. A girl convicted in 1786 of stealing on the highway is more likely to have been a Moll Flanders than a Clarissa Harlowe. But whatever her past may have been, I fancy that both she and Bryant (whose crime of smuggling was almost respectable) were by no means incapable of reform; that both of them asked nothing better than a chance to make a new start and an honest living in Australia, and that they fled from the Colony only because they feared that they and their children would starve. It speaks well for them that they endangered the success of an already desperate venture by taking those children with them. It would be possible to cite instances of very respectable—even noble—persons who thought the desertion of an infant or two a small matter where their own lives were concerned.

I have, as I say, avoided sentiment. But as I ponder the story of Mary Bryant two imaginary pictures of her rise in my mind, and since they have come without prompting, I give them to you. In one she sits at the tiller of the boat, steering it, under a light breeze, through the night. Bryant stands at the prow, scanning the sea for shoals; all the other convicts lie stretched in the bottom of the boat. Her little boy sleeps beside her knee; her baby slumbers in her lap. The great tropical stars are mirrored in her hopeful eyes, and the breeze stirs her hair gently. In the other she stands in the hard light

of day on the deck of the *Gorgon*, haggard, unlovely in her tattered, filthy clothes. The Captain, very stiff and smart, is just closing the prayer-book, and two sailors are dropping over the side the little canvas sack that holds the body of her baby. Her hands grip each other tightly, but she makes no outcry.

In this summer of 1792, James Boswell, bibulous and erratic Scottish lawyer, was wearing out his dreary existence in London, whither he had brought his family in 1786, lured by impractical dreams of making a name and fortune at the English Bar. The *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* and the *Life of Samuel Johnson* had both appeared and had both enjoyed great success, but neither had sufficed to appease the restless ambition which tore the heart of their author. The recovery of Boswell's Journal does not change in many respects the view of his character which serious students of his life have always held, but it does overthrow completely a thesis which I once maintained, not without eloquence: namely, that the chief object of his ambition was literary fame. For the Laird of Auchinleck, descendant of a line which had maintained its ancestral mansion for 250 years, eighth cousin of His Majesty George III, it was not enough to have been "an humble attendant on an Authour" and to have written the *Life of Johnson*. That great book, we now know, was written in despair and published in misery, and its publication brought its author no lasting satisfaction. What James Boswell thirsted after more than the juice of the grape was to make speeches in the House of Commons or to sit on the wool-sack. Seeing little chance of gaining prominence at the Scottish Bar, and, in truth, scorning all the prominence it offered, he came to London in his forty-sixth

year, was admitted a barrister of the Inner Temple, and trudged off to King's Bench like a schoolboy, with a little note-book in which, merely by listening, he hoped to garner the legal knowledge which other men had acquired by years of grinding toil. When already past middle age he went as Junior on the circuits, the butt of practical jokes devised by cubs twenty years younger than himself. His beloved wife had died, after many years' struggle with tuberculosis, leaving him with five children whom he loved but whom he felt unable to care for properly. Lord Lonsdale, who had raised his hopes of Parliamentary fame to fever-pitch by making him Recorder of Carlisle, had turned upon him with shocking brutality, and had given him a description of his abilities and character which Macaulay might have envied.

An idle, unhappy, dissipated man, but a man who in his feckless wandering through life had managed to perform more acts of kindness than the majority of his successful colleagues. Since he had been admitted to the English Bar he could have counted his fees on the fingers of his two hands. But he still had some legal business. From the first of his professional life he had shown extraordinary interest in poor criminals whom no one else would defend, and this interest he kept to the end of his life. It was inevitable that when early in July 1792 he read in his newspaper of the Botany Bay convicts, he should at once have roused himself from his lethargy of woe and hurried down to Newgate to interview them. He kept no journal during this period, but we know from later references that he at once became very zealous in their behalf, and that they looked to him as their sole advocate. Since there was no trial, he had no opportunity to display his forensic eloquence. The man

finally responsible for their fate was his old college-mate and enemy, Henry Dundas, then Secretary of State. On the last occasion that correspondence had passed between them, Boswell had reminded Dundas of a promise the great man had made him years before, and had asked for its fulfilment. Dundas had replied by complimenting him on his lively fancy. We may be sure that Boswell would have found any further appeal distasteful, but he set his private feelings aside. Dundas set a day to see him, and Boswell deferred a long-projected trip into Cornwall to keep the appointment. Dundas failed to appear. Boswell went home and wrote a letter: "The only *solatium* you can give me for this unpleasant disappointment is to favour me with two lines directed *Penrhy, Cornwall*, assuring me that nothing harsh shall be done to the unfortunate adventurers from New South Wales, for whom I interest myself. . . . A *negative* promise from a Secretary of State I hope will not be withheld, especially when you are the Secretary, and the request is for compassion." We know also that he importuned Evan Nepean, the Under-Secretary, and a "Mr. Pollock," Chief Clerk in the Secretary of State's office.

On 7 July 1792 Mary Bryant, James Martin, John Butcher, William Allen, and Nathaniel Lilley were put to the bar of the Old Bailey and ordered "to remain on their former sentence, until they should be discharged by due course of law." The legal penalty for escape from transportation was death, but the Government had no desire in this case to proceed with the full rigour of the law. As Nepean later told Boswell, "Government would not treat them with harshness, but at the same time would not do a kind thing to them, as that might give encouragement to others to escape." They were accordingly sent to

Newgate under an indeterminate sentence. It is some comfort to learn from the newspapers that they considered "the prison a paradise, compared with the dreadful sufferings they endured on their voyage."

Ten months later Dundas thought it safe to move in the case of Mary Bryant. On 2 May 1793 "by His Majesty's command" he set his hand to a free and unconditional pardon for her, in which the King is made to say that "some favourable circumstances have been humbly represented to us in her behalf inducing us to extend our Grace and Mercy unto her." Unfortunately Boswell's Journal has again lapsed, and we know none of the details of that affecting scene when Mary Bryant stepped into the air again a free woman. But we do know that she settled in Little Titchfield Street, London, and that Boswell supplied her with funds. He tried to get her gifts from other sources. Soon after her discharge he called without an invitation to breakfast with the former Lord Chancellor, Thurlow. "I asked him," he says, "to give something to Mary Broad. He exclaimed, 'Damn her blood, let her go to day's work.' But when I described her hardships and heroism, he owned I was a good Advocate for her, and said he would give something if I desired it."

On the night of 5 June, as we learn from the *London Chronicle*, Boswell, while coming home drunk, was attacked in Titchfield Street by footpads, knocked down and nearly killed, robbed and left senseless in the street. He may have been returning from a call on Mary, but it is quite as likely that he had been to see his brother David, who lived in Titchfield Street.

The Journal opens again on 1 August 1793, and it is in this, the last journal Boswell kept, that we find extended references



Dear Sir

I staid in town a day longer, on  
purpose to wait on you at your office,  
yesterday about one o'clock, as your  
letter to me appointed; and I was there  
a few minutes before one, but you were  
not to be seen. The only solatium you  
can give me for this unpleasant disap-  
pointment, is to favour me with two  
lines directed Penryn Cornwall informing  
me that nothing harsh shall be done to  
the unfortunate adventurers from New  
South Wales, for whom I interest myself, and  
those very extraordinary case surely will  
not found a precedent. A negative pro-  
mise from a Secretary of State I hope will  
not be withheld, especially, when you are  
the secretary, and the request is for compas-  
sion. I always am  
Great Portland Street } Dear Sir  
16 August 1792. } very faithfully yours  
James Bowen

LETTER TO THE RT. HON. HENRY DUNDAS

(Reproduced two-thirds actual size)

to Mary Bryant, or Broad, as Boswell always calls her. I wish to present these pretty much without abridgement. The pen which drew the portrait of Dr. Johnson loses none of its cunning in depicting this poor waif from the Antipodes.

On 18 August he writes, "This morning there called on me Mr. Castel at No. 12 Cross Street, Carnaby Market, a Glazier, who told me that he was a native of Fowey and knew all the relations of Mary Broad very well, and had received a letter from one of them directing him to me; that he wished to see her and inform them about her, and also to introduce her sister Dolly to her, who was in service in London. He mentioned that a large sum of money had been left to Mary Broad's Father and three or four more—no less than three hundred thousand pounds. I had a suspicion that he might be an impostor. However, I carried him to see her, and from his conversation it appeared that he really knew her relations. She did not recollect him, but he had seen her in her younger days. I was pleased with her good sense in being shy to him and not being elated by the sound of the great fortune. He said he would bring her sister Dolly to her in the evening. I walked away with him nearly to Oxford Street, and then returned to Mary and cautioned her not to put any trust in any thing he said till he had brought her sister. I sauntered restlessly. . . . Called on Mary in my way home, and found that Castel had actually brought her sister Dolly to her, a fine girl of twenty, who had been in great concern about her, and shewed the most tender affection."

The next day he went to see the four men still in Newgate to "assure them personally that I was doing all in my power for them."

On 25 August he met Dolly. "In the evening I went to Mary Broad's to meet her sister Dolly, who was very desirous to see me and thank me for my kindness to Mary. I found her to be a very fine, sensible young woman, and of such tenderness of heart that she yet cried and held her sister's hand. She expressed herself very gratefully to me, and said if she got money as was said, she would give me a thousand pounds. Poor girl, her behaviour pleased me much. She gave me, on my inquiring, her whole history since she came to London, from which it appeared that she had most meritoriously supported herself by good service. She was now Cook at Mr. Morgan's in Charlotte Street, Bedford Square, but the work was much too hard for her, a young and slender girl. I resolved to exert myself to get her a place more fit for her. It was now fixed that Mary should go by the first vessel to Fowey to visit her relations, her sister there having written to me that she would be kindly received. She had said to me as soon as she heard of the fortune that if she got a share she would reward me for all my trouble."

There is no further mention of Mary until 12 October: "I had fixed that Mary Broad should sail for Fowey in the *Ann and Elizabeth*, Job Moyse, Master, and it was necessary she should be on board this night, as the vessel was to be afloat early next morning. Having all along taken a very attentive charge of her, I had engaged to see her on board, and in order to do it, I this day refused invitations to dinner, both from Mr. Ross Mckye and Mr. Malone. I went to her in the forenoon and wrote two sheets of paper of her curious account of the escape from Botany bay."

These sheets, alas! have not been recovered; I can only

hope that they still exist, and will one day see the light. But in his search of the manuscripts at Malahide Castle in March of this year (1937), Colonel Isham had the happiness to light upon a small packet endorsed by Boswell, "Leaves from Botany Bay used as Tea." Inside, just as Boswell placed them there, were a handful of heavily veined brown leaves—probably the only material relic of Mary Bryant now existing. Strange dark river, which quenches the bright flame of life, buries in oblivion the agony and heroism of human hearts, and casts at our feet a packet of withered leaves!

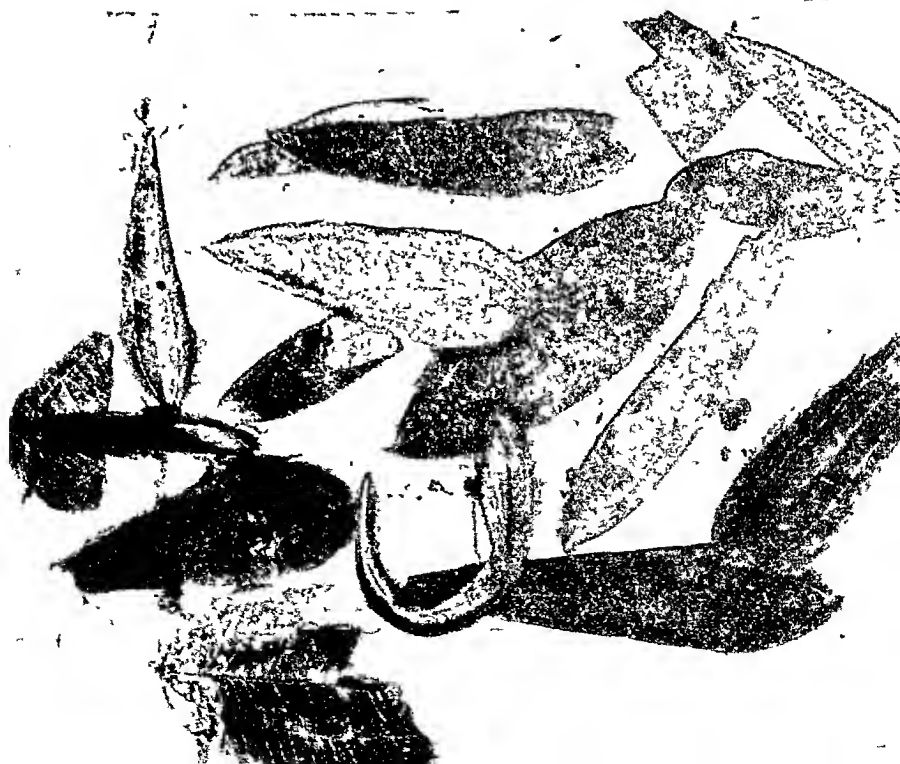
"I dined at home," Boswell continues, "and then went in a hackney coach to her room in little Titchfield street and took her and her box. My son James accompanied me, and was to wait at Mr. Dilly's till I returned from Beale's Wharf, Southwark, where she was to embark. I sat with her almost two hours, first in the kitchen and then in the bar of the Publick house at the Wharf, and had a bowl of punch, the landlord and the Captain of the vessel having taken a glass with us at last. She said her spirits were low; she was sorry to leave me; she was sure her relations would not treat her well. I consoled her by observing that it was her duty to go and see her aged Father and other relations; and it *might* be her interest in case it should be true that money to a considerable extent had been left to her father; that she might make her mind easy, for I assured her of ten pounds yearly as long as she behaved well, being resolved to make it up to her myself in so far as subscriptions should fail; and that being therefore independent, she might quit her relations whenever she pleased. Unluckily she could not write. I made her leave me a signature 'M.B.' similar to one which she carried with her, and this was to be a

test of the authenticity of her letters to me, which she was to employ other hands to write. I saw her fairly into the cabin, and bid adieu to her with sincere good will. James had tired at Dilly's waiting so long and was gone home. I followed him. I paid her passage and entertainment on the voyage, and gave her an allowance till 1 November and £5 as the first half year's allowance per advance, the days of payment to be 1 November and 1 May."

The letter which puzzled Mr. Bettany shows Boswell a year later punctiliously fulfilling his promise, and makes clear that subscriptions *had* failed, and that he was paying the entire sum himself. So much for "irons in the fire."

On 2 November Boswell called on Mr. Pollock, and ("as I had often done before," he adds) urged clemency for the four men still in Newgate. James Martin's time had expired, and Boswell left the certificate of his conviction, which he had procured by a call on "Mr. Follet, Clerk of Assize on the Western Circuit." On his coming home to dinner he found that all four men had been freed by proclamation and had come directly to his door. With the entry for the next day they disappear for ever from the Journal. Nor can I tell you anything more about Mary Bryant's life from the day that Boswell parted with her at Beale's Wharf, except that she must have been living in Fowey or the vicinity a year later. The parish registers of Fowey and Lostwithiel contain no record of her remarriage or burial. A woman named Mary Bryant was married to one Richard Thomas at St. Breage parish in 1807; that may be our Mary, who would then have been only forty-two, but I doubt it. I am sure that we shall find out more about her. I hope that it will prove that she

Leaves from Botany Bay  
used as Tea



emigrated to America and became the ancestress of someone now reading this book. I can say with complete sincerity that I know of no one whom I should more proudly claim as my forbear than that heroic girl who escaped from Botany Bay and was befriended by James Boswell.

# NOTES



# NOTES

- pp. 3 and 4. *adwise*, *Richson*, *cranes*: actual puzzles in the text of the *Boswell Papers*.
- p. 6. "Be so good," etc.: *Letters of James Boswell*, ed. C. B. Tinker, Oxford, 1924, ii. 462. There is a complete photographic facsimile of the letter in *The R. B. Adam Library*, Oxford, 1929, Vol. III, between pp. 34 and 35.
- Ib.* "But why," queried Mr. Bettany: *Diaries of William Johnston Temple*, ed. Lewis Bettany, Oxford, 1929, p. lxxi.
- pp. 7-14. The historical sketch is a mosaic from the standard sources: (1) contemporary accounts and documents: David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, 2nd ed., London, 1804; *Voyage of H.M.S. 'Pandora' . . . being the Narratives of Captain Edward Edwards, R.N., the Commander, and George Hamilton, the Surgeon*, ed. Basil Thomson, London, 1915; Arthur Phillip, *The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay*, 2nd ed., London, 1790; Watkin Tench, *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson*, London, 1793; the invaluable *Historical Records of New South Wales*, ed. Alexander Britton and F. M. Bleaden, Sydney, 1892-3 (Vols. I and II); (2) histories of Australia, such as G. B. Barton, *History of New South Wales from the Records*, Sydney, 1889-94; G. W. Rusden, *History of Australia*, London, 1883; Ernest Scott, *A Short History of Australia*, Oxford, 1916; etc. In citing these in the following notes I use the cue titles "Collins," "Edwards," "Hamilton" (note that "Edwards" and "Hamilton" are the same book), "Phillip," "Tench," "*Hist. Rec.*"
- p. 9. Lord Sydney's letter: *Hist. Rec.*, Vol. I, part 2, pp. 14-16; the suggestion concerning the importation of native women is contained in an enclosure sent with the letter; *Idem*, p. 18.

- p. 10. Phillip's letters to the Commissioners are conveniently printed in *Hist. Rec.*, Vol. I, part 2. The passages quoted from the letters of 18 March and 11 April will be found at pp. 59 and 77.
- p. 11. "*when it is considered*": *Hist. Rec.*, Vol. I, part 2, p. 92.
- Ib. 757 convicts: the numbers are variously given. See the note, Series 1, Vol. I, p. 712, in *Historical Records of Australia*, Sydney, 1914, published by the Joint Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia. (Not the same work as the *Historical Records of New South Wales*.)
- p. 11. *William Bryant*: according to the account in the *London Chronicle*, June 30-July 3, 1792, which is here followed in the main, he was convicted "six years and a half ago" (i.e., at the end of 1786 or the beginning of 1787) at Bodmin. The "List of Convicts sent to New South Wales in 1787," printed as an appendix to Phillip's *Voyage* (p. lvii), gives the assize, however, as Launceston, and the date of sentence as 20 March 1784. I have accepted this date because it agrees with Collins's statement (p. 129) that before his escape Bryant asserted that his sentence had expired. Indeed, as Bryant fled on 28 March 1791, it looks strongly as though he had deliberately waited until he thought himself a free man.
- Ib. *Mary Broad*: her age is fixed by the baptismal register in the parish church of Fowey: "Mary, Daughter of William Broad, Mariner, and Grace his wife, of Fowey, was baptized in this Church on May 1st 1765, by Nicholas Cory, Vicar." (Certificate through the courtesy of the Reverend W. Raveley Guest, Vicar of Fowey.) The details of her crime are from the *London Chronicle*, June 30-July 3, 1792, and the *Dublin Chronicle*, 21 July 1792, as quoted in *Hist. Rec.*, ii. 800-2. Both accounts are somewhat ambiguous as to the date of her sentence: "six years and a half ago." But both accounts agree in saying that James Martin was convicted at the same assize, and Phillip (Appendix, p. lxvi) gives the date of Martin's sentence as 20 March 1786. (Mary Broad's name does not appear in Phillip's list of convicts.) That her

parents were "poor but respectable" is inferred from Boswell's Journal, quoted later in the article.

*Ib.* the whole convoy was in Botany Bay: Phillip found both the harbour and the surrounding territory unsatisfactory, and pitched upon Port Jackson, just north of Botany Bay, for his settlement. Strictly speaking, Mary Bryant was never connected with Botany Bay, but I have retained that name in my title because it carries its meaning at once, whereas "Port Jackson" or "Sydney Cove" would not.

p. 15. Details of Bryant's escape: George Hamilton (p. 162) says that he was "the Governor's fisherman"; Tench (p. 107) says that he seized the Governor's cutter; Collins (p. 129) says that the party made their escape in a "fishing-boat." The newspaper accounts, with much less probability, say that Bryant bought the boat from the Dutch captain, Detmer Smith. The provisions are listed identically in the newspapers. The quadrant and compass are mentioned by Tench and the newspapers; the chart by Collins (p. 129) and Hamilton (p. 162). Collins adds (what seems very probable) that Captain Smith also furnished Bryant "with such information as would assist him in his passage to the northward." "Firearms" are mentioned by Tench; the *London Chronicle* specifies "two old musquets and a small quantity of powder." All authorities agree on the date of the escape; the newspapers give the hour. The ages of the children are given by the newspapers as three and one; Collins says that Charlotte was still at the breast.

*Ib.* John Simms, alias Samuel Bird, was convicted at the Croydon assizes, and sentenced, 20 July 1785, to transportation for seven years (Phillip's list, p. lvi). Nothing more is known of him.

I have found nothing concerning William Morton.

James Cox was convicted at Exeter, and sentenced, 24 May 1784, to "Life," that is, he was capitally convicted, but his sentence was later commuted to transportation for life (Phillip's list. p. lviii).

James Martin, alias John Martin, "about 32 years of age [in 1792], was convicted at the same assizes with Mary Briant, of stealing

old lead and iron, weighing 20 lb. the property of Lord Courtney, and was sentenced to be transported for seven years" (*London Chronicle*). To this the *Dublin Chronicle* adds the interesting detail (supported by the description in the Newgate Register) that he was "of the county of Antrim, Ireland." He was convicted at Exeter, and sentenced on 20 March 1786 (Phillip's list, p. lxvi). The MS Registers of Newgate Prison, 1792-3, now in the Public Record Office, contain the following description of him: "Age 34, height 5'9", Grey eyes, Black hair, Sallow complexion, born in Ireland" (H.O. 26/56, p. 5 and 26/3, p. 5).

*John Butcher*, alias *William Butcher*, alias *Samuel Broome*, "30 years of age [in 1792], was convicted at Shrewsbury, five years ago, of stealing three small pigs, and was sentenced to be transported for seven years" (*London Chronicle*). The *Dublin Chronicle* adds that the pigs belonged to "John Harsbury," and dates the conviction "five years and a half ago." I do not find him under any of his known *aliases* in Phillip's list. The following description is entered in the Register of Newgate: "Age 30, height 6'1", Grey eyes, sandy hair, fresh complexion, born in Worcestershire, labourer" (Pub. Rec. Off., H. O. 26/56, p. 5 and 26/3, p. 5).

*William Allen*, "aged 55 [in 1792], was convicted at Norwich six years ago of stealing twenty-nine handkerchiefs in the shop of Messrs. Lewis and Haywood in that city, and sentenced to seven years transportation" (*London Chronicle*). The date is wrong; the Registers of Convicts in the Public Record Office show that he was convicted on 30 July 1787, and sent to Australia in the Second Fleet (Register H. O. 11/1, p. 58). He arrived at Sydney at the end of June 1790, and had therefore been in the colony less than a year when he absconded. He is described in the Register of Newgate as follows: "Age 56, height 5'11", hazel eyes, dark brown hair, dark complexion, born at Kingston Hull, mariner" (Pub. Rec. Off., H. O. 26/56, p. 5 and 26/3, p. 5).

*Nathaniel Lilley*, "thirty-nine; he was capitally convicted five years ago last March, at Bury St. Edmunds, of stealing a fish-net, a

watch, and two spoons, the property of Benjamin Summerset, privately in his dwelling, but there being favourable circumstances in his case the Judge reprieved him on his agreeing to go for seven years to Botany Bay" (*Dublin Chronicle*). He was actually convicted on 19 March 1788, and, like Allen, went in the Second Fleet (Pub. Rec. Off., Register of Convicts, H. O. 11/1. His description in the Register of Newgate is, "Age 39, height 5'8", Grey eyes, Black hair, Sallow complexion, born in Ireland" (Pub. Rec. Off., H. O. 26/56, p. 5 and 26/3, p. 5). It is interesting to note that two of the five survivors were Irish.

*Ib. they dropped some of their rice:* "They were traced from Bryant's hut to the Point; and in the path were found a hand-saw, a scale, and four or five pounds of rice, scattered about in different places, which it was evident they had dropped in their haste. A seine belonging to government was likewise found, which, being too large for Bryant's purpose, he had exchanged for a smaller that he had made for an officer" (Collins, p. 129).

*Ib. an . . . account written by a newspaper reporter:* The relations of the different newspaper accounts are very perplexing. The *London Chronicle* and the *General Evening Post*, June 30 to July 3, 1792, print stories that are verbally identical, except that the *General Evening Post* gives the names of the Bow Street officers (omitted in the *London Chronicle*) who brought the survivors from the *Gorgon* to the Court: "Murrant, Kennedy, and Miller," and for the phrase of the *Chronicle*, "after surmounting infinite hardships and dangers, they landed . . ." substitutes, "after surmounting hardships and dangers, which to recount would more than fill our columns." Since both papers appeared on the same evening, neither could have copied from the other; and since the variants are so slight, the natural inference is that they are reprinting the same source practically *verbatim* and entire, for two abridgers working independently would not normally arrive at results so nearly identical. The *Dublin Chronicle* of 21 July 1792 (reprinted in *Hist.*

*Rec.*, ii. 800-2; I have not seen the original), however, though it omits parts of the account given in the *London Chronicle* and the *General Evening Post*, adds many other details that turn out to be correct. The Dublin paper must have reprinted some London paper. My guess is that a London daily newspaper printed the story of the convicts on the morning of Monday 2 July. This was abridged in an evening paper of the same date; the *London Chronicle* and the *General Evening Post* (which appeared on the evening of Tuesday 3 July) reprinted the abridgment almost without change. The *Dublin Chronicle* made an independent abridgment of the original article. Readers having access to a good collection of London daily newspapers of the year 1792 can probably solve the puzzle with very little search. In my references, the *General Evening Post* can be everywhere substituted for the *London Chronicle*. I have quoted only the latter, since the accounts are to all practical intents identical, and the *Chronicle* is generally much easier of access. The passage quoted from the *Chronicle* will be found at p. 2 of Vol. 72.

p. 16. Tench: p. 108, note.

p. 17. On 5 June: date from the newspapers and Tench.

p. 18. *there was no professional navigator . . . and . . . only [Bryant] and one other convict are known to have been familiar with the sea*: Tench says that "among them were a fisherman, a carpenter, and some competent navigators" (pp. 107-8). Bryant was the fisherman, and William Allen was a "mariner"; some of the others *may* have been "navigators," but nothing in the existing records shows it.

*Ib.* The arrest at Kupang: from Tench, who is supported by the newspapers. George Hamilton (pp. 161-2) gives a much more exciting version which I should like to follow: The fugitives were unsuspected until the arrival of Edwards's party. "The captain of a Dutch East Indiaman, who spoke English, hearing of the arrival of Capt. Edwards . . . run to them with the glad tidings of their Captain having arrived;

but one of them, starting up in surprise, said, 'What Captain! dam'me, we have no Captain.' . . . This immediately led to a suspicion of their being imposters; and they were ordered to be apprehended, and put into the castle. One of the men, and the woman, fled into the woods; but were soon taken." But there is against him the testimony of Edwards himself. When the fugitives were brought to the Bow Street Office on 30 June, Edwards appeared to identify them: "Captain Edwards, commander of his Majesty's late ship the *Pandora* of 20 guns, said that when his ship was lost, he and the remainder of his crew took to their boat and made a place called Coepang a Dutch settlement in the island of Timor; that on his arrival the Governor informed him, he had in custody eight men, one woman, and two children, (all English) who had put into the island about three months before in distress, having been near ten weeks at sea in an open boat, with a very scanty allowance of provision and water. They then said they belonged to a ship bound to Botany Bay, which had been lost. After they had been on the island some time he found they were convicts who had escaped from Botany Bay. On the arrival of Capt. Edwards they were delivered over to his care, and after paying the Dutch Governor the expences he had been at for their support, procured a passage for them in a ship going to Batavia" (*Evening Mail*, June 29-July 2, 1792). This same account says that "by working for the officers in the colony, Martin had at one time acquired 200 dollars, of which he paid the Dutch Governor 56 for his subsistence while he was at Coepang."

- p. 18. *a vessel belonging to the Dutch East India Company: the Rembang.* At Batavia the convicts were divided, Allen, Mary Bryant, and the little girl being placed on the *Horssen*; Martin, Butcher, Morton, Simms, and Lilley on the *Hoornwey*. Cox was probably on the *Horssen*. (Edwards, pp. 80, 83, 85, and the MS log of the *Gorgon* in Pub. Rec. Off., Masters' Logs, Ad/52/3056, 23 March and 2 April 1792).

Ib. Deaths of Emanuel Bryant, William Bryant, William Morton, and John

Simms: from the report sent by Edwards to Philip Stephens, Secretary of the Admiralty, 19 June 1792 (Edwards, p. 85).

*Ib.* Conflicting accounts of Edwards and Hamilton with regard to James Cox: "James Cox, Dd, fell overboard Straits of Sunda" (Edwards, p. 85); "In our passage . . . to the Cape, before we left Java, one of the convicts had jumped over board in the night, and swam to the Dutch arsenal at Honroost" (*Idem*, p. 169). Cox told Edwards that his sentence had expired, which was not true unless his "life" sentence had been commuted to seven years' transportation. Edwards considered him to be equally responsible with Bryant in planning the escape (p. 82).

*Ib.* *H. M. S. Gorgon*: The following entries in the ship's log concern the convicts (Pub. Rec. Off., Masters' Logs, Ad/52/3056):

"Friday 23rd [March 1792] Recd. from the Dutch Ship Horses the three following supposed Deserted Convicts from Port Jackson  
William Allen Mary Bryant & Charlotta Bryant. . . .

Mon. 2 April Came on Board . . . 3 supposed convicts [i.e. Butcher, Lilley, and Martin] brought by Capt. Edwards."

p. 19. *the little girl, Charlotte Bryant, died*: Edwards, p. 85.

*Ib.* *When Mary Bryant was brought before Nicholas Bond, Esq.: London Chronicle.*

He was friendly: "Mr. Bond declared he never experienced so disagreeable a task as being obliged to commit them to prison, and assured them as far as lay in his power he would assist them" (*Evening Mail*, June 29-July 2, 1792). "These poor people being destitute of necessities, several gentlemen gave them money" (*London Chronicle*).

*Ib.* Description of Mary Bryant: Pub. Rec. Off., H. O. 26/56, p. 5.

*Ib.* *only because they feared that they and their children would starve*: This was what the survivors told the reporter (or the court): "They were reduced to four ounces of flour and four of salt beef per day" (*Dublin Chronicle*).

p. 21. *a thesis which I once maintained*: in the Introduction to *The Literary Career of James Boswell, Esq.*, Oxford, 1929.



- Ib.* eighth cousin of H. M. George III: Boswell by indirection called the relationship to the King's attention, when, on 15 June 1785, he told him that he was cousin in the seventh degree to Prince Charles Edward Stuart (*Boswell Papers*, xvi. 101). The common ancestor of all three was John, 3rd Earl of Lennox, grandfather of Lord Darnley.
- Ib.* a little notebook: No. 301 in the Isham Collection. See the Catalogue by F. A. and M. S. Pottle.
- p. 22. Lord Lonsdale: *Boswell Papers*, xviii. 51-2. A sample: "He used shocking words to me, saying, 'Take it as you will. I am ready to give you satisfaction.' 'My Lord,' said I, 'you have said enough.' I was in a stunned state of mind, but calm and determined. He went on with insult: 'You have kept low company all your life. What are *you*, Sir?' 'A gentleman, My Lord, a man of honour; and I hope to shew myself such.' He brutally said, 'You will be settled when you have a bullet in your belly.'"
- Ib.* poor criminals whom no one else would defend: See the story of the sheep-stealer, John Reid, which occupies the greater part of the ninth volume of the *Boswell Papers*; that of the house-breaker Margaret Hamilton (*Idem*, xvi. 291-4). For another pleasant instance of legal benevolence, see the story of John Constantin, apprentice (*Idem*, xviii. 234-7).
- Ib.* they looked to him as their sole advocate: see the extracts from his Journal quoted later in the essay.
- Ib.* Dundas's promise to Boswell: *Letters of James Boswell*, ed. C. B. Tinker, ii. 524-6. Boswell had said, "As to your compliment on my lively fancy, it has never yet exerted itself in inventing facts; nor am I one of those who are blessed with an accomodating memory which can recollect or invent facts as it may suit self-interest for a time."
- p. 23. Boswell went home and wrote a letter: on 16 August 1792. See the facsimile; Boswell's hand is so clear that a complete transcript seems an impertinence. This letter, which is owned by Dr. Amos A. Ettinger, has not hitherto been printed.

*Ib.* Mr. Pollock's initial was W.; his name no doubt William (*London Calendar for the Year 1792*, p. 104).

*Ib.* On 7 July 1792: *London Chronicle*, July 7-10, 1792 (72:27).

*Ib.* As Nepean later told Boswell: on 14 November 1792 (*Boswell Papers*, xviii. 177-8).

*Ib.* they considered the prison a paradise: *London Chronicle*, July 10-12, 1792 (72:38).

*Ib.* Mary Bryant's pardon: the full text is as follows (Pub. Rec. Off., Correspondence and Warrants, Entry Book, H. O. 13/9, f. 221; Newgate Register, H. O. 26/56, p. 57):

"2 May 1793 Mary Bryant alias Broad, free pardon  
G. R.

"Whereas Mary Bryant, otherwise Broad, now a prisoner in Newgate, stands charged with escaping from the persons having legal custody of her, before the expiration of the term for which she had been ordered to be transported. And whereas some favourable circumstances have been humbly represented to us in her behalf inducing us to extend our Grace and Mercy unto her, and to grant her our Free Pardon for her Said Crime. Our Will and Pleasure therefore is, that you Cause her, the said Mary Bryant, otherwise Broad, to be forthwith discharged out of Custody and that she be inserted for her said Crime in our first and next general pardon that shall come out for the poor convicts in Newgate, without any condition whatsoever. And for so doing this shall be your warrant. Given at our Court at St. James's the 2nd Day of May 1793 in the thirty third year of our Reign.

(Signed) By H. M. Command

HENRY DUNDAS.

"To our Trusty and Wellbeloved  
Sir John William Rose Knt.  
Recorder of our City of London,  
and Sheriff of our City and County  
of Middlesex."

The newspapers surrounded the granting of the pardon with agreeable mystery: "The female convict who made her escape from Botany Bay, and suffered the greatest hardships during a voyage of three thousand leagues, and who was afterwards retaken and condemned to death, has been pardoned, and released from Newgate. In the story of this woman there is something extremely singular. A gentleman of high rank in the Army visited her in Newgate, heard the detail of her life, and for that time departed. The next day he returned, and told the old gentleman who keeps the prison that he had procured her pardon, which he shewed him, at the same time requesting that she should not be apprised of the circumstance. The next day he returned with his carriage, and took off the poor woman, who almost expired with excess of gratitude." (*Dublin Chronicle*, 4 June, 1793, reprinted in *Hist. Rec.*, ii. 809-10.) This is almost certainly one of those "inventions" which Eighteenth-Century newspapers did not scruple to mix with their genuine news accounts. From it Becke and Jeffery got the suggestion for Lieut. Fairfax.

p. 24. *Little Titchfield Street*: see Boswell's Journal, 12 October 1793, later quoted.

*Ib.* *Boswell supplied her with funds*: there is the clearest evidence that his benevolence was disinterested. Boswell's life was irregular, but the Journal (which is usually very frank in such matters) hints at no improper connexion with Mary Bryant. On the day of her departure from London he took his favourite son, James (then aged fifteen), with him when he went to her lodging. If she had been his mistress, he would never have allowed James to meet her.

*Ib.* Boswell and Lord Thurlow: *Boswell Papers*, xviii. 246.

*Ib.* *On the night of 5 June*: *London Chronicle*, June 8-11, 1793.

*Ib.* *On 18 August he writes*: *Boswell Papers*, xviii. 200.

p. 25. *The next day he went to see the four men still in Newgate*: *Ibid.*

*Ib.* On 25 August he met Dolly: *Boswell Papers*, xviii. 203-4.

p. 26. no further mention of Mary until 12 October: *Boswell Papers*, xviii. 217-8.

p. 28. On 2 November Boswell . . . urged clemency for the four men still in Newgate: *Boswell Papers*, xviii. 223-4. Nepean had probably already decided to free them. On 1 November 1793, Joseph White, who seems to have been a legal adviser, had written to him as follows: "The convicts some time since committed to Newgate for returning from Botany Bay before their terms had expired, have intimated an intention of moving to be discharged, as their sentences are now expired. Mr. Chamberlayne says that when they were committed to Newgate Lord Granville [William-Wydhham Grenville, Baron Grenville, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs] had little disposition to prosecute them, and as their sentence is expired the prosecution may not be necessary. So shall they be discharged?" (Pub. Rec. Off., Law Officers, Reports and Correspondence, H. O. 48/3.)

*Ib.* With the entry for the next day they disappear for ever from the Journal: something more is known of Butcher. On 23 January 1793 he had addressed from Newgate a letter to Dundas, saying that he was well versed in agriculture, knew what kinds of crops would grow in Australia, and, "altho' he had suffered a great deal in going and coming from Botany Bay, yet he was willing to go back again on proper terms." He was allowed to enlist in the New South Wales Corps, and on 5 September 1795 received a grant of twenty-five acres "on the river Hawkesbury" (*Hist. Rec.*, ii. 4, 355).

*Ib.* The parish registers of Fowey and Lostwithiel: searched for me at the request of Mr. Hony by the Vicars of the parishes, the Rev. W. R. Guest and the Rev. Canon Philip E. Browne.

*Ib.* A woman named Mary Bryant was married . . . at St. Breage parish: on 13 October 1807; registers examined for me at the request of Mr. Hony by the Vicar, the Rev. Canon H. R. Coulthard.